

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - P A R A N B R T W O

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

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TAGS: PFOR, PARM, NATO, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET PRESS AND USA INSTITUTE OFFICIALS ON MBFR

1. SUMMARY AND COMMENT. THE FIRST SOVIET PRESS COMMENTARY
TO APPEAR ON THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH ROUND OF MBFR IN
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VIENNA EMPHASIZES SOVIET INTEREST IN PROGRESS IN THE

NEGOTIATIONS, BUT TAKES A VERY FIRM LINE ON SUBSTANCE AND IS SHARPLY POLEMICAL ON NATO. WE SEE IT AS SERVING TO BOLSTER THE SOVIET NEGOTIATING POSITION AND TO AVOID DEMANDEUR POSTURE IN VIEW OF HEAVILY PUBLICIZED SOVIET OFFICIAL STATEMENTS ELEVATING THE VIENNA TALKS TO STATUS OF "FIRST-PRIORITY" TASK FOR SOVIET DIPLOMACY. SEVERAL WELL-INFORMED SOVIET CONTACTS HAVE STRESSED THE NEED FOR RAPID PROGRESS IN THE TALKS, AND, SPEAKING IN CONDITIONAL TENSE, HAVE OFFERED OPINION THAT A "QUALITY" WESTERN PROPOSAL TO REDUCE TAC NUKES ASYMMETRICALLY COULD LEAD TO WARSAW PACT ASYMMETRIC GROUND FORCE CUTS. AT SAME TIME, MAIN THRUST WAS NEED FOR SPEED, AND TWO CONTACTS ALLUDED TO VIRTUES OF ALMOST ANY FIRST STEP, EVEN SMALL. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

2. IZVESTIYA ON SEPT 25 PUBLISHED THE FIRST COMMENTARY TO APPEAR IN THE SOVIET PRESS ON THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH ROUND OF MBFR. THE AUTHORS (K. PEREVOSHCHIKOV AND N. POLYANOV) FOLLOW THE LINE ESTABLISHED IN THE AFTERMATH OF HELSINKI OF PORTRAYING THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS AS A FIRST PRIORITY TASK WHICH SHOULD BE SOLVED WITH ALL DUE SPEED. ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES, HOWEVER, THEY REVERT TO A FIRM LINE, AND ADD, FOR GOOD MEASURE, POLEMICAL POTSHOTS AT THE "RECKLESSNESS" OF NATO, GOODPASTER'S ADVOCACY OF MINI-NUKES, AND SCHLESINGER'S VARIOUS DOCTRINES ON TACTICAL USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THEY SPECIFICALLY, AND IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER, ATTACK: THE ALLEGED WILLINGNESS OF ONLY THE U.S. TO TAKE UPON ITSELF "CONCRETE OBLIGATIONS" TO REDUCE, IN CONTRAST WITH "STUBBORN" REFUSAL OF FRG, UK, AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS TO DO SO; WESTERN REFUSAL TO REDUCE TROOPS AND WEAPONS "IN THE COMPOSITION IN WHICH THEY NOW EXIST", THAT IS, TROOPS, MATERIEL, AND UNITS EQUIPPED WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS; AND NATO "DISARMAMENT ARITHMETIC" WHICH CALLS FOR THE SOVIETS TO REDUCE TWO AND HALF TIMES MORE THAN THE WEST. THEY LAMENT THE APPARENT LACK OF DESIRE ON THE PART OF NATO "TO ACQUIRE EXPERIENCE IN DISARMAMENT", BUT CONFIDENTLY PREDICT THAT THE CHANGING CORRELATION OF FORCES WILL SOON FORCE SUCH A DESIRE ON THE ATLANTIC ORGANIZATION. THEY END ON A SEMI-FAVORABLE NOTE, CONTENDING THAT CONDITIONS ARE NOW FAVORABLE FOR PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT WARNING THAT "TIME WILL NOT WAIT" AND THAT ARMS CONTROL

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AND DISARMAMENT IN EUROPE "HAS ITS OWN NEGATIVE LOGIC".

3. USA INSTITUTE OFFICIALS SEMEYKO AND SVYATOV (POLITICAL-MILITARY AFFAIRS) AND DAVYDOV AND UTKIN (U.S.-EUROPEAN RELATIONS) IN A CONVERSATION SEPT 26 WITH EMBOFFS EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR RAPID PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS IN ORDER TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE "SPIRIT OF HELSINKI". SOVIETS RAISED THE SUBJECT OF POSSIBLE WESTERN PROPOSALS TO BE LAID

ON THE TABLE DURING THIS ROUND ON TACNUKE REDUCTIONS, AS
CARRIED IN THE WESTERN PRESS. SOVIETS EXPLAINED THAT ASYMMETRIC
CUT IN TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS BY NATO COULD BE IMPORTANT
INCENTIVE TO WARSAW PACT ACCEPTANCE OF ASYMMETRIC GROUND FORCE
CUTS, THOUGH DETERMINING FACTOR WOULD BE THE "QUALITY" OF
WESTERN WEAPONS REDUCTION. SEMEYKO MADE POINT THAT "QUALITY"
WOULD HAVE TO BE HIGH TO CONVINCE THE SOVIET UNION TO REDUCE
ITS TRADITIONAL RELIANCE ON MANPOWER EDGE IN THE EUROPEAN
THEATRE. AT SAME TIME, BOTH SEMEYKO AND DAVYDOV IN
EMPHASIZING DESIRABILITY OF SPEED VOLUNTEERED THAT FIRST
STEP, EVEN SMALL AND INSIGNIFICANT IN SECURITY TERMS, IS
WHAT IS IMPORTANT AT THIS JUNCTURE.
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